

STAFF

GRIEVANCE POLICY AND

PROCEDURE

EATON HOUSE SCHOOLS
POLICY DOCUMENT

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Introduction

Eaton House Schools recognises, that from time-to-time employees may wish to seek redress for grievances relating to their employment or against colleagues. In this respect, the Schools policy is to encourage free communication between employees and their senior colleagues to ensure that questions and problems arising during the course of employment can be aired and, where possible, resolved in timely manner and to the satisfaction of all concerned. To this end, the following procedure will be adopted where an employee has a grievance arising from their employment, or a group of employees have a collective grievance, arising from their employment, except where the matter constitutes an appeal against a disciplinary decision which should be taken up in accordance with the Schools separate disciplinary appeals procedure. This policy will also apply to collective grievances.

The procedures will be in accordance with the legal requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018 for the handling of personal data.

This policy is available to employees in the staff section of the Schools website. A hard copy can also be provided from the Schools office.

Arrangements for Resolving Grievances

Step 1 – Informal Steps

Employees will be encouraged to seek informal resolution for grievances. Informal discussions will be held with the colleague concerned or the Head/Line Manager depending on the focus of the grievance.

If necessary, an appropriate member of the leadership team may be involved, including the Principal and/or Bursar.

Step 2 – Stating the Grievance

If informal discussions do not resolve the issue, the employee must write to the Head or Line Manager with full details of the grievance.

If the grievance involves another employee, a copy of the letter will be given to him or her.

If the grievance is against the Head, then the letter will go to the Principal and/or Bursar, with a copy to the Head.

It may be appropriate for the Head or Line Manager (or the Principal and/or Bursar if the grievance is against the Head or Line Manager) to instigate an investigation into the circumstances of the grievance.

The Head or Line Manager (or the Principal and/or Bursar, if the grievance is against the Head or Line Manager) will then invite the employee to a meeting. This invitation will ideally be within five working days of receiving the complaint.

If the grievance is against Principal, then the Bursar or another member of the Senior Management team will instigate an investigation into the circumstances of the grievance.

If the grievance is against Bursar, then the Principal or another member of the Senior Management team will instigate an investigation into the circumstances of the grievance.

The Head Teacher or Line Manager will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

Step 3 - Invitation to Meeting

The invitation to the meeting will be:

- a. in writing
- b. made within five working days of receiving the employee's letter, unless the Head or Line Manager (or Principal and/or Bursar) writes to the employee deferring a meeting for no more than two weeks pending the outcome of the investigation.

The employee will receive at least three working days' notice of the meeting.

The invitation to the meeting will remind the employee of his or her right to be accompanied at the meeting.

The staff member/s which includes, the Head or line manager, if the grievance is against them have the right to be accompanied at the meeting.

If the companion is unable to attend the meeting on the date or at the time designated, he or she may request another reasonable time within the following five working days.

All relevant papers will be circulated to each party in sufficient time before the meeting for all concerned to study them.

Step 4 - The Meeting

The procedures for the meeting will be as follows.

- The meeting will be clerked.
- The employee will present his or her case, calling any witnesses if desired, and will then be open to questions.
- If the grievance is against a colleague or the Head or Line Manager, they may then respond, calling any witnesses, and then being open to questions.
- If the grievance is against the Head or Line Manager, the Principal and/or Bursar will chair the meeting.
- Each party will then sum up.
- The aim will be to reach a decision and announce it before the end of the meeting if possible. If this is possible, both parties will withdraw while a decision is being considered before returning to hear it.
- Whether or not the decision can be announced at the conclusion of the meeting, it will be communicated in writing to the employee (and any other party involved) within the next seven days.
- The letter will also inform the employee of his or her right to appeal against the decision if the employee is unhappy with the decision and tell him or her how to make the appeal.

Step 5 – Appeals

If the employee is unhappy with the outcome of the formal meeting, he or she must write to the Principal and/or Bursar within ten days to request an appeal hearing.

The procedures for an appeal hearing are as follows.

- a. In consultation with the Principal and/or Bursar, the Head of HR will convene a meeting of the appeals panel of the Principal and/or Bursar within three weeks of receiving the letter.
- b. The employee will not be given less than seven days' notice of the meeting. If this meeting is likely to fall during the School holidays, including half term, the Head of HR will liaise with all concerned — including the employee's union representative or work colleague if need be — regarding availability, and if necessary, will defer the meeting until the first day of duty for any teachers involved.
- c. The letter inviting the employee to the meeting will remind him or her of his or her right to be accompanied, according to the Schools policy.
- d. The Panel could consist of:
 - an Eaton House Schools Senior Management
 - a Head Teacher of one of the group's other School
 - there could also be a third person who may be independent from the School.

The panel members will not have been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint before this panel.

- e. If the Principal and/or Bursar deem it necessary, they may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than three days prior to the hearing.
- f. The Head or Line Manager and others attending the meeting may also be accompanied and the Panel may have an adviser.
- g. The meeting will be clerked.
- h. All papers which are to be referred to by either side will be circulated in sufficient time before the meeting for each side to study them and make a response.
- i. The appeals panel will hear the employee first, together with any witnesses, followed by the person against whom the grievance was mounted (the colleague, the Head or Line Manager) with his or her witnesses.
- j. At the end of each side's presentation, including each witness, the other side and then the panel may ask questions.
- k. Each side will then sum up.
- l. The aim will be to reach a decision & announce it before the end of the meeting. If this is possible, both parties will withdraw while a decision is being considered before returning to hear the decision.
- m. Whether or not the decision can be announced at the conclusion of the meeting, it will be communicated in writing to the employee and any other party involved within the next seven days.

n. The decision of the Appeals Panel is final.

Information and Training

Employees will be made aware of the Schools grievance procedures at their induction training.

Complaints Procedure Table

